(d) The University Grants Commission pays grants directly to Universities and Colleges which are eligible to receive Central assistance under Section 12B of the UGC Act, 1956.

Impounding of Air India Aircraft Beas at Lagos Airport

*132. SHRI VIRENDRA VERMA:
SHRI ISH DUTT YADAV:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Inquiry Commission set up to enquire into the impounding of Air India aircraft "Beas" at Lagos airport by the Nigerian Government in August, 1987 has submitted its report to Government;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what action has been taken by Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI SHIVRAJ PATIL): (a) to (c) One A-310 aircraft of Air-India operating flight AI 203 on 25-8-87 was detailed at Lagos as the customs officials of Nigeria claimed to have found hard drugs in some pieces of unclaimed baggage inside the aircraft. In this connection, a high level Government delegation conducted long negotiations in Lagos and eventually arrived at a mutually acceptable solution. The aircraft and the crew members were then released and cases on either side were withdrawn. Air-India suffered loss of some revenue on account of impounding of the aircraft.

The matter is receiving appropriate attention.

Fares increased by Indian Airlines

*133. SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH:
DR. ABRAR AHMED KHAN:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian Airlines has increased domestic fares recently;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor;

(c) how many times Indian Airlines has increased its domestic fares during the last three years; and

(d) whether any study has been conducted with regard to fare structures of other domestic Airlines as compared to fares of Indian Airlines and if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI SHIVRAJ PATIL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The reasons for increase in domestic fares are as follows:—

(i) Rise in material costs and wages;

(ii) Increase in navigational and other charges;

(iii) Increase in food costs;

(iv) Financing purchase of A-320 aircraft;

(v) Rise in US dollar rate;

(vi) Increase in other costs.

(c) During the last 3 years (from the financial year 1986-87 till date) Indian Airlines has increased its domestic fares three times.

(d) Comparison of Indian Airlines' fares with the fares of other domestic airlines reveals that the fares of Indian Airlines are amongst the lowest in the world. A statement of some comparative fares, as per information available, is attached. (*See* Appendix CLI, Annexure No. 73)